

SEVEN SCARY STORIES
FROM SCOUT CAMP

by
Gnarly Flanders

*For the Scouts of Troop 0327—
Who refused to go to sleep until they heard “just one more scary
story. . . PLEASE!”*

— G.F.

PROLOGUE:

THE EERIE GREEN GLOW FROM BEYOND THE HILL

A troop of Boy Scouts were camping one night in the sage and juniper covered hills of Southern Utah. Suddenly they noticed an eerie, flickering, green glow coming from beyond a nearby hill. Startled by the discovery, they immediately stopped talking and listened. Echoing from the distance, they could hear a haunting sound: “Oooga-booga, ooga-booga, ooga booga!” Concerned about the safety of his boys, the Scoutmaster rose from the fire and cautiously made his way to the top of the hill to investigate the ghastly chanting.

The boys watched with apprehension as their leader reached the top of the hill, then froze in his tracks and let loose a blood-curdling scream: “Ohhh my gosh! Oh no! Aaaaah! Aaaaaaaah! AAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHH!” Then fell to the ground. Dead.

Alarmed, the Assistant Scoutmaster rushed to the top of the hill to help the fallen leader. But, upon arriving at the top, the boys watched with growing alarm as he too let loose and unearthly scream: “Oh my heck! It can’t be! No! No! NOOOOOOOOOOOO!” Then fell to the ground. Also dead.

Not knowing what else to do, the Senior Patrol leader decided that it was up to him protect the troop. So, he too rushed to the top of the hill. The boys at the bottom of the hill gaped with horror as he too reached the top of the hill, and screamed: “No! It’s too terrible! I can’t stand it! Ah! Aaaah! AAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHH!” And fell, lifeless, to the ground.

Next, the Troop Historian knew that he just *had* to get a picture of whatever was killing all the leaders—to put in Troop scrap-book. So, camera in hand, he rushed to the top of the hill. With his disposable camera still held to his eye, he let out an angry wail before falling to the earth: “Hey! You just broke my camera! Ah! Aaah! AAAAAAARGH!”

One by one, the rest of the boys in the Scout troop made their way to the top of the hill. The Chaplain’s Aid. The Troop Guide. The Scribe. The Den Leader. And one by one they all fell to the ground, dead as doornails, exclaiming:

“AAAAACK! AAAAAAAAYE! EEEEEEEEEEW! AAAAAAAAARF!”

Finally, there was just one Scout left. A young boy who had entered the troop only a few days before. Not wanting to be alone by the fire. And wondering if perhaps this type of thing was a routine part of camping with the Scouts, he made his way to the top of the hill—where the eerie glow still flickered in the background, and the chanting had grown even louder.

It was *there* that he saw it. The most terrifying thing his eyes had ever beheld
A troop of Girl Scouts camped below—*without any makeup!*
“AAAAAAAAAAAAARRRRGH!” He screamed, then fell to the ground. Dead.

Councilor's Comments / Scoutmaster's Minute:

Part of growing up is learning to confront the things that frighten and challenge you—rather than hiding from them or ignoring them. We will never find the answers to our problems by merely sitting, and doing nothing. It is sometimes scary to do difficult things. But usually, once we have done it, we learn that it wasn't so scary or so difficult after all. The worst of challenges can be overcome if we show a little courage—even encounters with rival Girl Scout Troops.

Discussion:

* *Name one challenging thing that kids today really ought to do, but are sometimes too scared to do.*

* *What do your parents do to help you do things you really don't want to do?*

* *What will you do when you are a parent to help your kids learn to do difficult things?*

ONE:

THE DREADFUL TALE OF POOCHY-KIN, THE MAN EATING POODLE

Eudora Pearson was an elderly woman. She lived alone in a rickety, old trailer-house, located in a small trailer park on outskirts of Milford, Utah. Her children were all raised and gone, so to pass the time she would turn on the TV, nestle herself comfortably into her brown reclining chair, and knit while she watched soap operas.

One Thanksgiving, while visiting from Las Vegas, Eudora's daughter Flo brought a gift for her mother—a poodle which she had rescued from an Vegas animal shelter. The people at the pound said the hungry dog—skeleton thin, except for its bulging, bloated stomach—had been found rummaging through a dumpster outside a nearby slaughter-house. Eudora fell in love with the dog instantly, and named him Poochy-Kin. The dog had thick, curly black hair and large brownish-red eyes—brown like the color of dried blood. Dark and mysterious. When the light was low, Eudora thought they almost seemed to glimmer and glow a soft red.

Poochy-Kin would growl contentedly as Eudora scratched behind his hears, or rubbed his tummy. And when he became hungry, he would whine imploringly, and would lick his mistress's hand as she sat in her reclining chair. Sometimes, when she didn't respond promptly enough, he would gently nibble her fingers to remind her he was there. The dog had an hearty appetite. But, even on her limited budged Eudora insisted on feeding Poochy-kin the very best. Ordinary dog food simply wouldn't do! Poochy-Kin deserved *fresh-ground* hamburger from the market. He would devour the meat hungrily, until his mouth dripped with red blood, and his stomach was bloated.

"Oh Poochy-Kin," Eudora would exclaim. "You messy puppy!"

It was during the following spring that the neighbors first noticed the smell. A sickening, rotten smell. The smell of something dead, coming from inside Eudora's trailer. It had been several days since anyone had seen Eudora, and they feared the worst. The Sheriff was called, and a deputy sent to check on the scene. When the officer arrived and knocked on the trailer door, nobody answered.

"Mrs. Pearson! Are you there?" he called out. There was no response. Only the faint sound of the television, still on somewhere inside. Cautiously the officer turned the nob, and opened the door. Putting his head inside, he was immediately overwhelmed with the pungent reek of rotten flesh. There was *definatly* something dead inside. Pulling his head back out, he took a breath of

fresh air. Then, placing a handkerchief over his nose and mouth, he stepped inside the trailer. A day-time talk show was blaring on the television screen. And there, resting in a brown reclining chair, was a lifeless human form. It was Eudora Pearson. Dead.

Her body was severely bloated and decomposed, like some dead animal left too long by the roadside. Her eyes were open, but empty and glazed over. Her face red and raw. Small, newly-hatched maggots crawled along the silvery, rotten skin of her exposed neck and arms. Where her left hand should have been, was an empty stump. And there, licking & nibbling hungrily at the stump of its dead mistress, was the small, black, poodle. Turning and bolting for the open door, the deputy wretched convulsively as he vomited on the steps of the trailer.

Radioing dispatch for assistance, the mortician was contacted to remove the body, and animal control soon arrived to pick up the dog. The poodle whimpered mournfully as it was carried from the trailer, and loaded into a cage in the back of the control officer's truck.

Back at the pound, the days passed. None of Eudora's children were interested in picking up their mother's pet. Unclaimed, the animal was scheduled to be destroyed. On the morning of the tenth day after its capture, the animal control officer tromped through the mud toward the cage in the back-lot of the Pound where Poochy-Kin had been kept. Unlatching the pen, the officer was astonished to see that the poodle was gone. Gazing inside, she gasped with surprise to see that the metal wires to the dog's pen had been chewed clean through, making a small hole—Poochy-Kin had escaped.

It was only a few weeks later when the first skeleton was found. A pair of horseback riders, enjoying a leisurely Sunday ride through the sagebrush-covered flats Northwest of Milford, discovered the scattered bones. The body was almost completely picked clean of flesh. There were small gnaw-marks on the bones, as if some wild animal, perhaps a coyote, had enjoyed a grim feast. The officers were uncertain who the body belonged to. Nobody from Milford had been reported missing, or anywhere else in Beaver County for that matter. Most likely some old transient who had gotten off one of the trains, made camp in the sagebrush, and frozen to death in his sleep. Later, his body had been chanced upon by the coyotes, who made a meal of him. The investigation declared complete, and the case closed.

But then, exactly two weeks after the first skeleton was discovered, a second

skeleton was found. This time, the strewn remains were spotted about 30 miles away, to the North and East of the small town of Greenville. A pair of teen-age boys who were rabbit hunting chanced upon the scattered human remnants. Once more, the Sheriff's investigation noted the presence of small chew marks on the flesh-stripped bones. But again, that was to be expected. Coyotes would certainly devour any dead body they chanced upon. This time, however, the identity of the body was more of a mystery. The train tracks were nowhere near. If the body belonged to a wandering hitch-hiker, he could only have wandered up from Highway 21, approximately a mile to the South—a two lane stretch of lonely highway leading from Milford to Beaver. The killer was moving East.

As an attorney I am sometimes required to work late. It had been several days since the second skeleton had been found, and I was walking home from my old Main Street office after a long day in Court. Although I had left my files back at the office, I carried my empty briefcase in my right hand—out of habit, I suppose.

As I was walking along Center Street past the highschool, I noticed the shape of a small black dog rummaging through the trash scattered beneath a dumpster. The animal lifted its head and gazed in my direction, and for an instant, as the light of the street lamp caught its eyes, they seemed to glow with an eerie red. I quickly turned my gaze back to the road, so as not to challenge the animal, or make it nervous.

A few moments later, as I drew near the hill at the intersection of 300 East and Center, I heard the soft sound of padded feet approaching me from behind. And then, as the sound drew nearer, a low guttural growl. Frothy. Hungry. Anxious. As though moving in for a kill.

Go ahead and call me a coward if you like, but I realized in that instant that my only hope of escape was to run. So at top speed I made for the Hilltop apartments. And as I ran, I sensed the animal closing in behind me. In a few moments, I reached the door, pulled it open, and bolted inside. As the door slammed shut behind me I heard a thud against the door, then the sound of snarling and pawing outside. It was bloodthirsty. Angry at the loss of its prey.

I needed to find a telephone, and fast! Making my way down the long hall, I knocked on the door of my old friend, Edward Mervin, an older fellow who made his home at the apartment complex. As he answered the door, I quickly explained my plight, and he agreed to let me come inside and use his phone. I picked up the

receiver and began to dial. Suddenly, the line went dead. Dead, as if it had been cut. Or pulled. Or *chewed* in half. With Ed's help, I quickly followed the phone cord to where it connected to the wall. It was still secure. The cut had been made outside.

Then, without warning, the lights went out.

"Was that you?" I called over to Ed.

"No. I didn't do it," Ed replied. "Someone must have cut the power from outside," Ed stated a moment later. "I can't get the light switch to work."

I stood and thought for a moment. There was nothing left to do here. If I wanted to call animal control for help, I would have to make a break for home. But not out the front door. The dog was sure to be there still. I would use the sliding glass door leading out the back of Ed's apartment. I carefully slid the door open, and stepped softly outside. Then I saw it. A small, black poodle, waiting for me on the porch.

But this was no monster. The dog seemed suddenly small and helpless—shivering with cold, or fear. It was looking up at me with big, sad eyes, and was whimpering softly. Pitifully. "Christiansen, you're such a wimp!" I silently scolded myself. "I can't believe you were afraid of this *puppy*. He's more afraid of you than you are of him. He probably just wants something to eat."

Kneeling, I reached my hand out to the small animal, and spoke sweetly. "Ah, poor fella. Come here."

Cautiously, he crept forward, his head lowered, whimpering. As he drew near, I carefully moved my fingers toward his scraggly head.

"RRRRRRAAAAARRRRRRR!" Poochy-kin roared, as he lurched forward and bit deeply into my outstretched thumb. Yelling in pain, I wrenched bleeding hand free from his jaws, and hastily retreated back into the apartment, slamming the sliding door shut behind me.

"Ed, do you have any meat?" I exclaimed. "Something I can use to distract the dog while I make a break for it out the East door?"

Rummaging through his refrigerator, Ed quickly found a package of sausage links, and handed them to me. Sliding the door open just a crack, I tossed box outside. "Gggrrrrrraaarrrrrrrrrmmmmmm." The dog growled, as it hungrily attacked the package. The ploy was working! Without hesitation, I dashed through his front door, then out the East entrance of the apartment complex toward home.

I was rounding the physical therapy building, south of the old hospital building, when I heard the sound of Poochy-Kin approaching me from behind. Lunging forward, I ran as quickly as I could toward my house. However, scanning

the distance to the front door of my house, I realized that it was too far. There was no way I would make it in time. I had only one choice. I would have to turn and confront the beast. Then an idea popped into my head. Stopping, I quickly unlatched my empty briefcase and pulled it open. And none too soon! As Poochy-Kin, with demonic speed and agility, was leaping toward my neck I raised the briefcase in front of me, and slammed it shut, miraculously capturing him inside. Fastening the hasps shut, I dropped the quivering, shaking briefcase onto the street and ran inside my house.

A few minutes later Animal Control arrived. I quickly explained what had happened, and carefully lifted the briefcase—now strangely silent and still—and handed it to the responding lady officer.

“Christiansen, what do you think you’re doing?” She replied, rolling her eyes in exasperation. “Do you mean to tell me that you locked a *poodle* inside your briefcase? You’re the one who should be locked up—for cruelty to animals!”

“Listen to me!” I explained frantically. “He’s dangerous. He’s a killer.”

“Yeah, *sure*,” she replied with clear sarcasm. “A real man-eater I bet.” She lifted the suitcase and tossed it gingerly into the front seat of her patrol truck. Then shaking her head one last time, she climbed inside the vehicle, shut the door, and started the engine.

“Whatever you do,” I yelled, approaching the open window of her truck, “Don’t open that briefcase until you’re back at the pound. Please, just trust me on this.” She rolled her eyes again, then shaking her head and muttering a few curses at me under her breath, drove away.

I watched from the curb as the truck stopped and signaled to turn right at the intersection of 400 East and Center. But then it simply remained stopped. Through the dark windows of the truck cab, I could see movement of some kind, as if the officer were rummaging with something. She was opening the suitcase. I just knew it. A few more seconds passed. And then it happened. A sudden scream pierced the chill air, of agonizing pain. Then, a small black shadow bolted from the open window of the truck’s cab. And Poochy-Kin, free again, escaped into the night.

So, my young friends, be warned! If ever you walk home alone some night, and you hear the padded footfalls of a small dog approaching you from behind—if you hear soft whimpering, or a low, hungry growl—*RUN!* For Poochy-Kin, the Man-Eating Poodle, is at hand.

Councilor's Comments / Scoutmaster's Minute:

Many parents believe that they show love to their children by pampering and spoiling them. In this story, the overindulgence which Eudora Pearson showered upon her beloved pet, Poochy-Kin, helped created a monster—a savage beast who ultimately exploited and devoured her, and went on to terrorize the countryside. When your parents discipline you, they are actually showing you that they love you—that they care about the choices you make, and the person you become.

Discussion:

- * ***How could Eudora Pearson have prevented Poochy-Kin from becoming a vicious, man-eating poodle?***
- * ***What will you do when you become a parent to keep your kids from “going rotten?”***
- * ***What do your parents do to help remind you to be good?***

Two:

TEDDY'S REVENGE

Charlie Grodin was a miner and a trapper who spent his summers high in the Tushar Mountains East of Beaver, where he dug for gold beneath the high peaks of Delano, Belknap, and Baldy. During the winter months, he made a living by trapping along the banks of the Beaver River as it wound its way West past Minersville, then North toward Milford, and then on to Sevier Lake.

Perhaps Charlie is best remember for the large black bear that tagged along behind him wherever he wandered. There are many stories, many legends, about how he gained the bear's companionship. The most widely believed version is this—that one winter, while checking his traps along the Beaver River, near the mouth of the Canyon, he came across a large she-bear with its leg caught in one of his iron-jaw trap. Beside the she-bear was a small cub, looking anxiously at its mother large with large, wondering eyes. The cub stared blankly, uncomprehending, as Charlie lifted his rifle to his shoulder, took aim, and shot the mama bear right between the eyes.

They say that Charlie skinned the she-bear as the cub stood looking on—shooing the wailing thing away as it pawed at its mama's lifeless body. When the skinning was done, Charlie strapped the she-bear's hide onto his pack mule, ready to take the cape to town for sale. As he was riding away, however, he noticed the cub tagging along behind, following the lingering scent of its mother's hide.

Charlie raised his rifle, and was about to shoot the cub, when an idea struck him. Why not let the cub follow along? With the scent of the mama-bear still on him, the cub could perhaps be persuaded to think that Charlie was his mama. He would feed the animal scraps from the campfire, and allow it to grow. Finally, when it large enough, and the time was right, he would shoot it, and sell its cape for another handsome profit. "A fine idea, for a bit of easy money," Charlie thought to himself.

So, day by day, week after week, the cub was fed by the scraps that Charlie threw to it. It grew bigger, and bigger. And everywhere Charlie went, the animal followed behind him. He never named the creature, except to call it "Bear." It tagged him high into the mountains during the summer months while he mined, then to the lowlands of Beaver and West toward Milford during the Winter while he trapped.

Sometime after that Charlie took a Paiute squaw for a wife. Nobody knows for sure how he acquired the poor, wretched woman. It certainly couldn't have

been willingly. Most folks believe that one night, during a drunken game of poker with the a neighboring Pahvant chief, Charlie won the squaw. The woman had been captured by the Pahvant during a raid on the Pa'anchi tribe to the North, and been made a slave.

After that the woman bore Charlie a child. A small, black-haired papoose that she carried everywhere. Though flashes of rage sometimes escaped her eyes as she glanced side-long at Charlie, there was never any question that she loved the child dearly. She bundled it up in warm rabbit skins, and carried it strapped in a bundle around her front.

Charlie eventually became rich. Noone knows for sure how he got the money. Some say that somewhere, high in the mountains, he struck a vein of pure gold. But rather than putting his money in any bank, he stashed his wealth in a stone box atop Jackson County Hill, near the base of the Tushar range. He kept all his treasure there, hoarding it secretly.

Although it is commonly agreed that Charlie was a treacherous, cruel, miserly man. But there were are some who also accused him of being a scoundrel, and a thief—a man capable of murder. James Blackner was another miner who staked out a claim above Indian Creek, just North of where Charlie was mining. Blackner kept a cabin along Indian Creek Canyon. One day, a group of fishermen, who stopped to pay Blackner a visit, found his dead body in his old a rocking chair by the fireplace, with a bullet in his back. His cabin was in complete disarray. As if someone had been searching for something. Sure enough, there in the corner, the floorboards had been peeled up, and a chest lifted from the hole beneath, emptied of its contents.

James Blackner's son Henry just knew that the murderer had to be Charlie. He was the only person who had a motive. Charlie had long been jealous of James's staked claim. The other miners respected one another's claims. But Charlie was oftentimes suspected of stealing from them. He was simply the only person greedy enough, and conniving enough to commit the crime. No doubt, it must be Charlie.

So, Henry plead his case to the Sheriff, who seemed satisfied with the evidence, and rounded up a posse. They rode to where Charlie was making camp, arrested him, and brought him back to town where he was placed in jail and scheduled for trial.

Charlie knew there would be no fair trial in this County. The jury would convict him purely based on his bad reputation. It would take drastic measures to

be acquitted of the charge. So, using the fortune that he stashed in the foothills east of town, he retained the finest attorney in the whole of Utah. He took the matter to trial, and with the skill of his lawyer, he was acquitted and went free.


He was free, yes. But his fortune was lost. Every last penny had been spent on his lawyer. He was pondering his lost fortune one afternoon shortly after his release, when his glance fell across the bear. Suddenly an idea flickered into his mind. He went and grabbed his rifle, loaded it, and brought it back to the bear.

At first the animal looked stupidly up with its large black eyes, as Charlie raised the rifle to his shoulder, took aim, and pointed the barrel at the creature. And then, in the instant before Charlie pulled the trigger, a sudden flicker of memory glimmered in the creature's eyes. As if a memory had returned to its consciousness from long years past. And a low growl erupted from its throat.

Then, "BANG!" The gun was fired, and the creature dropped dead. True to his intentions, Charlie skinned the animal, and stretched out its hide to dry. When he was preparing to take the skin in to town for sale, his squaw stopped him and began to plead with him to save a little bit of the skin. Not to sell it all, but to keep just a small piece in memory of their loyal pet and friend. She could sew, shape, and stuff the bear into a toy for their son. After all, the little boy had been so fond of the animal while it lived.

Charlie finally gave-in to the nagging of his wife, and kept some of its hide. True to her promise, the squaw took the swath of skin and sewed it in to an adorable stuffed bear, with a stitched mouth and buttons for eyes. The little boy loved the toy, and played with it tirelessly.

After that Charlie's life returned more or less to normal, trapping and mining in the old routine. One of his favorite camping sites was along a small stream that is now covered by the reservoir waters of Lower Kents Lake. It was a fine shady spot with a small creek running through the meadow.

It was here that the unexpected happened—on the day known to the white man as Friday the 13th, but also known to the Pa'anchi as *Tuo-na Yatahe* , or "the night of the ghosts' return." The Pa'anchi knew that on this date the creatures which men killed needlessly would return to seek revenge upon them. The elders among the tribe relentlessly taught the youth to kill only when there was need. Yet sometimes, when a youth would violate the creed and kill for sport, after due penance was made, the elders would advise the rash young warrior to bury any remnants of the kill deep beneath the ground, where it could not reshape from its remains. Then, a great bonfire would be held. And while the wayward warrior danced entranced around its flames, the medicine man would chant incantations to

ward off the evil spirits.

It was on this night that Charlie Grodin was camped beneath the East Fork of the Beaver River, below what is now called Tushar Lake. There were no medicine men at Charlie's campfire that night. No incantations to ward off the evil spirits. Instead, Charlie's squaw gave her husband, and master, an extra bottle of spirits to drink. A whole bottle of whiskey to warm his stomach.

When at last he lay stretched sleepily before the fire, she took their child and walked away into the forest. She did not stop, as from higher up the mountain she heard his screams echoing through the trees. Instead he hushed her baby to stay quiet, and quickly made her way home.

Some days later the Sheriff, who was making his way down off the mountain from other business, decided to check on Charlie. As he drew near the camping site, he notice the area to be in a great state of disarray. Supplies and gear were scattered and strewn about. Flies were swarming, and the air was thick with a foul smell—of something rotting. As he urged his horse into the center of camp, he suddenly came to a stop. He had found Charlie.

Strangely, just across the creek from where the corpse lay still was a small, stuffed teddy bear. Stepping closer, the Sheriff picked it up and examined it. Blood—human blood—encrusted its paws and mouth. And strangest of all, on its face it bore an expression. A glimmer of what almost appeared to be a smile.

The Sheriff took the stuffed animal home, cleaned it up, and gave it to his grandson as a birthday gift. After all, it was only a harmless stuffed bear. It certainly couldn't be held to blame for the Charlie Grodin's gruesome murder. The years went by, and the bear was passed from one owner to the next until at last its whereabouts have escaped all memory.

Yet most folks agree that it is still out there somewhere. Each night, some small child is lovingly tucked into bed, with a small black bear nestled snugly in his arms. The child kisses the bear affectionately. "I love you, Teddy," he whispers sleepily. The bears eyes glimmer for a moment as the lights are switched off. Then its mouth—stained a faint reddish-brown—grins contentedly.

Councilor's Comments / Scoutmaster's Minute:

It has been said that the worship of money has taken the place of the "idols" and "false gods" of the old testament. A person who devotes his entire life to acquiring gold and silver, will miss the real "treasures" along life's journey. A wise man once taught that sorrow comes to us in this world because we hold to the false belief that we actually "own" things. Although this illusion of ownership may give us temporary satisfaction, it ultimately leads us to sadness when we realize that our possessions are easily lost, broken, or stolen. They are not permanent. In the end, when we leave this life, the thing that will matter most is the wealth we have acquired, but memory of kindness we leave behind with those who knew and loved us.

Discussion:

- * How did Charlie Grodin's love of money lead to his destruction?*
- * What are the things in this life that bring true and lasting happiness?*
- * When you become a parent, how will you teach your children to value the things that truly matter?*

THREE:

THE MONSTER MAMA CRAWDAD OF SCHOFIELD RESERVOIR

PART I: THE ECCENTRIC TALE OF HENRY SCHOFIELD

Long before the white man came to the land of whispering waters—with his traps and snares, with his picks and shovels, with his fuses and dynamite, with his plows and axes—the Pa’anchi Indians, who hunted and fished along the waters of Clear Creek, told of an ancient evil that lurked among the small beaver ponds of the river. *Ketchki Nishela* they called it, or in the language of the white man: “The Shadow that Comes at Night, and Kills Without Sound.”

But, with the driving of the Pa’anchi from the land, a great evil that should never have been forgotten, was erased from all memory.

One of the first white men to walk along the shores of Clear Creek, before its pristine waters were buried beneath the mirky depths of present-day Schofield Reservoir, was a man named Henry Schofield.

It is said that Schofield had occasional dealings with the Pa’anchi. One summer, after he had made a fine trade of furs with the Indians, he was invited to a harvest feast, and treated by the Tribe to a meal of corn, squash, rabbit and fish. Not wanting to be an ungrateful guest, Schofield surprised his hosts by providing an offering of his own. When the Corn, fish, and rabbit were done, Schofield presented a bucket to the chief—a cache of squirming, writhing, wiggling crawdads. Schofield explained that the tasty tidbits had been caught by him earlier that day near a particularly large beaver pond lower down at the creek’s edge.

When the chief saw the contents of the bucket, he was aghast. “*Ketchki-Nishnela, Ketchi-Nishnela. Tuat-lat ne kan*”

Schofield did not fully understand the words of the chief. Something about a “monster,” a “great evil,” or bringing a “curse” upon the people. The chief quickly kicked the bucket over, and freed the captive crawdads—who went scurrying off down the hill. Hastening Schofield away from the camp, the Chief insisted that the trapper flee, and leave the boundaries of the Pa’anchi lands immediately. Not understanding all the excitement, but knowing the Pa’anchi to be a superstitious people, Schofield agreed. He quickly packed up his mule and departed.

Night had fallen when he made camp several miles downstream, on the bank of the same beaver pond where he had caught the crawdads that morning. A few twisted and dismembered crawdad husks, strewn along the shore, crunched

beneath his feet as he reentered encampment—leftovers from his noon sampling of the dainties. Weary from the day's events, he unfastened his bedroll from the mule, then spread it out beneath an overhanging Juniper. After taking a swig of whisky, he unfastened his gun belt to make himself more comfortable. Finally, in routine fashion, he placed his pistol beneath his pillow. He always slept more comfortably when he knew the gun was close by.

A few quiet minutes passed. As he was beginning to drift off, he heard a loud splash coming from the middle of the beaver pond. "Strange," he thought. He had already trapped out the beaver from this particular hole. The rodents had been skinned and their pelts traded to the Pa'anchi several days before. He roused himself for a closer look. From the light of the blood-red moon he could make out a string of large ripples coming from the center of the pond. Perhaps he had missed one of the beavers. No worry. He would set a trap the next morning, and catch that animal as well.

He couldn't be sure how much later it was that he was startled from his slumber—this time by a soft clicking noise nearby. He jumped, startled to see a huge, hulking form the size of a horse jump with a splash into the water. The shape was a flurry of large, writhing legs, and an enormous tail twisting and twirling above the shadowy form.

It all happened so fast, he couldn't really be sure that it was real. Perhaps he had merely been startled from a nightmare, carrying the image with him into wakefulness. Yes. That was it. The shape had been nothing more than a dream. A vision. Nonsense. Probably too much whisky. A little stomach upset from the crawdads he had eaten for lunch, and nothing more.

Still, this business about the crawdads nagged at him. Something about the fear in the Chief's eyes. His anxiousness that Schofield depart at once.

Checking that his gun was still beneath his pillow, Schofield did his best to return to sleep. It would be a busy day tomorrow, with travel to a new trapping site higher up the creek.

Several hours later he groggily awoke. He felt only half conscious, only half aware of his surroundings. Something was wrong. He certainly hadn't had *that* much to drink. Struggling to open his eyes, he was startled to look down at the base of his bedroll and see a pair of large, globular eyes. There was something sinister about the eyes. They were cold, unfeeling, and uncaring. But calculating. Like a snake. Like a spider—a spider whose prey has been captured in its web.

Behind those eyes Schofield blurily made out the shape of the same hulking form he had seen splash into the pond earlier that night: the long spindly legs, and

the dark elongated thorax. But the tail Where was the tail?

The strange, bleary, intoxicating feeling was nearly overwhelming now. Fighting against the urge to sleep, he struggled to open his eyelids and stare at the creature. What he saw next made his blood run cold.

Piercing the side of his leg was a long, sharp stinger—a stinger attached to the end of the creature’s tail, which had been lowered and thrust around the monster’s side. Schofield’s legs were being held fast in the creature’s strong pinchers. And there at the base of his leg, was a bloody stump. A stump in place of what should have been Schofield’s foot. The creature was devouring Schofield alive! Chewing gradually upward along his leg.

Yet how could this be? Schofield felt no pain. He felt nothing at all. Then, like a revelation, he realized the truth. The monster was releasing its venom into his side, through its stinger. Numbing his senses. Paralyzing his left side.

He tested his right arm. He could still move it, albeit with great effort. Wearily, knowing this to be his only hope for survival, he slowly reached up beneath his pillow. Was it still there? Yes. His fingers felt the touch of cool metal. Carefully gripping the handle, he raised the gun and pointed it at the creature.

BANG! He fired a round into the monster. It emitted a blood-curling shriek of horrible pain. Scurrying toward the edge of the pond it jumped back into the water, disappearing into the blackness.

Breathing a sigh of relief, Schofield mustered up his remaining strength. He dragged himself across the ground to the mule, unloosed it, then pulled himself onto the animal’s back where he collapsed into unconsciousness.

Instinctively the mule made its way back toward the Pa’anchi encampment. For a time Schofield was cared for by the medicine man. Later, when he was well enough, he made his way to nearby Price.

When Schofield told the townspeople that his foot had been eaten by a giant crawdad, people thought him mad. Unable to bear their ridicule and scorn he remained silent thereafter.

The years passed. A new reservoir was erected along Clear Creek, covering its many quiet pools and beaver dams. Yet from time to time, fishermen, outdoorsmen, hunters, and others who strayed along its shores would come up missing. Unexplainably.

Yet still Schofield remained silent. What use would it be to tell them? They

didn't believe him before, why would they believe him now.

At the end of his days. As an aged Henry Schofield lay on his deathbed, he made one last wish. He asked that after he passed-on, his remains be taken to Schofield Reservoir, and that his corpse be thrown into its headwaters. There, with a large stone tied to his legs, he be sent to a watery grave. He explained that in this way the creature would at last finish its meal of him. And, with the monster thus satisfied, the disappearances should finally stop.

His wishes were fulfilled, and his body was dropped to its mirky tomb in Schofield Reservoir.

Some say that on clear days when the water is peaceful and still, his body can still be seen at the bottom of the lake—undisturbed and waiting. Waiting eternally, because the creature likes its meals warm and alive, not cold and lifeless.

Others say that his ghost yet haunts the reservoir—that every afternoon, around four 'o clock, the time of his burial, a heavy wind bursts forth from the West mountains and rushes across the lake. And in the sound of the raging wind, those who listen carefully can make out the voice of Henry Schofield uttering a last warning: "Gooooohhhh. Gooooooooohhhhhhhh!" Then, as swiftly as it came, the wind stops. And silence returns.

Councilor's Comments / Scoutmaster's Minute:

Greed is the most common reason people get into trouble. They think about what they want right now, and often fail to see the consequences that their selfishness will bring them later. Often, our greed has a negative effect on other people as well. One person's greed can have terrible consequences that will impact many others.

Discussion:

- * ***What are some examples from recent news events that show how a person's greed has brought sorrow or tragedy to that person and others?***
- * ***When you become a parent, how will you teach your children not to be greedy?***

FOUR:

THE MONSTER MAMA CRAWDAD OF SCHOFIELD RESERVOIR,
PART II: THE MYSTERY OF ROCK ISLAND

De chin-chis nihle', I-yo hen-schlink-he'.

—Translated from the Paiute proverb to mean, “The evil that is lost to our memory, should never have been forgotten.”

It was the perfect day for a camp-out. The sky was a deep turquoise blue, with an occasional white fluffy cloud gradually floating by—just enough shade for a few moments of passing cool, to break up the heat of the afternoon.

Troop 313 of Price, Utah had been looking forward to this Boy Scout camp out for weeks and weeks. Their Scoutmaster, Blair Larsen, had told them of the wonders of Schofield Reservoir: the fishing, the sun, the canoeing, and best of all the delicious crawdads that scurried along the shore of the reservoir. When boiled to the right consistency, they made the most delicious dinner—comparable to any shrimp platter, he boasted.

The boys had ridden in the back of Blair’s brand-new 1950 International pickup truck, making their way gradually up the mountain from Price to the small town of Schofield. It was from Schofield that they intended to set sail on their canoe trip. Stopping by a small store along the outskirts of town, they gathered up a few last supplies, then made ready to load up their canoes and begin their adventure. They planned to paddle to Rock Island, located in the center of the lake.

At the entryway of the trading post, they noticed an old one-legged man wearing a large, wide-rimmed hat with a feather in the side. He was resting quietly at the entryway in a rocking chair. He watched them as they went about their business, curiously following them with his eyes. As the boys talked excitedly about their plans to canoe trip, and their plans for a crawdad dinner, he seemed to perk up and listen with particular interest.

When the group had finished shopping, and was making ready to leave, the old man stiffly rose from his chair. He waived the Scoutmaster to one side and spoke. “Don’t go out on the lake tonight. There’s a bad wind coming from west. There might be a storm tonight. Why don’t you stay here and make your camp on the shore. And instead of crawdad, why not some fresh lake trout instead. Besides, Crawdad is too bitter this time of year anyway.”

Blair politely laughed, and assured the old fellow (who must be a little mad) that he knew what he was doing. He had been to the lake many times before and it was perfectly safe. He had checked the weather forecast, and there was no chance of rain. But even if it did rain, they had brought their tents & tarps along and would stay dry. Besides, he had eaten crawdad many times before and it had always tasted great to him, whatever the season.

The old man shook his head, with a sad look in his eyes returned to his chair, and placed his head in his hands, as if in thought.

Leaving the old man behind, the Scoutmaster loaded the boys up and hauled them down to the edge of the lake where they quickly loaded up their canoes, and began paddling out to Rock Island.

What a time they had. The weather was perfect. The boys playfully splashed water at one another as they paddled. Once their mischievous energy was spent, the pulled out their fishing poles and cast a line or two as they made their way to the island.

The afternoon drew on, and as they were finally drawing near the island, without warning a sudden gust of wind erupted from the West. It blew with such force, the boys nearly capsized. The boats began to be driven rapidly back toward the shore. As they fought to paddle onward, the howling gale sounded loudly in their ears, as if a voice of warning were calling to them from inside the wind.

Then, just as quickly as it came the wind subsided. Rallying the boys, Blair urged them on toward the island. Pulling the boats ashore, the supplies were unloaded and camp was made ready. Tents were set up, and firewood was gathered. Some of the boys the Scoutmaster sent off with buckets and pails, to gather up the crawdads that scampered along the rocky shore.

Building a fire, the crawdads were dumped into a large kettle of steaming hot water to be boiled alive. "They're juicier when they're cooked that way," Blair explained as the small, insect-like bodies writhed and squirmed in the boiling water for a few moments, and then fell still.

Soon the Troop had a fine feast of the most delicious, tender crawdads. They ate and ate, until they were stuffed and could eat no more. As the feasted the boys scattered the torn remnants and carcasses of the small creatures on the ground about them.

One boy abstained from the feast, however. A timid new scout of twelve who had joined the troop just last week. Something about the feast nauseated him. The rotten smell of the lake, perhaps. Or perhaps the thought of eating something that lived in the foul muck. Taunt him as they might, the boy would not partake.

Shortly after dinner, the wind blew up again. This time it blew from the North, bringing with it dark, ominous clouds that blotted out the last remnants of the sun as it set in the West. First, only small drops of rain fell. Then larger drops. And then larger drops. The boys scrambled to their tents, and the Scoutmaster scrambled to his. In no time they were safe and dry inside, as the storm howled and raged about them.

The boys had trouble sleeping that night. Although their tents stood firm, it seemed as if there were more voices in the wind. Then there came a strange rattling and shaking on the outside of the tent, as if something were trying to get in. Finally, the shaking relented. Through the howling of the wind and the pounding of the rain, came a distinct human cry—the cry of an adult man, in pain or fear. Something was very, very wrong. The sound was coming from the direction of the Scoutmaster’s tent.

Concerned, the Senior Patrol Leader, a tall dark-haired boy of 13½, hurriedly put on his boots, donned his rain poncho, unzipped the tent, and sloshed through the storm toward the Scoutmaster’s tent. As he drew near, he noticed that the front tent flap was open, fluttering vigorously in the wind. Shining his flashlight inside, he entered. “Mr. Larsen!” he called out. There was no reply.

At first he could see nothing in the darkness. He couldn’t be sure where the Scoutmaster might be sleeping. So he knelt down to feel the ground. The floor was wet beneath him, puddled with rain from the open flap. The water felt strangely warm and slippery to his fingers. After a moment, when his eyes had adjusted to the darkness, he noticed the Scoutmaster’s sleeping bag in the corner, the shape of a still form resting beneath the covers. Reaching and pulling the cover back, the boy jumped in alarm. His flashlight! Where was his flashlight? Oh, yes. He had placed it in one of the side pockets to his poncho as he was unzipping his tent. Quickly he retrieved it and shone it at the sleeping bag. An empty scream erupted from his throat. There, in the dim light, was the Scoutmaster’s lifeless body.

Frantically, he pushed open the tent and hastily stepped outside. Rapidly he ran to the tents where the other scouts were bundled. Waking them with his screams, he ordered them to immediately get dressed and prepare to leave. Something was very, very wrong. Something had butchered their Scoutmaster.

Not fully understanding, but sensing the fear in the Senior Patrol Leader’s voice, the Scouts did as they were told. Leaving the tents and packs behind, the boys jumped into their canoes, grappled up the oars, and hastily began paddling

back out into the lake.

The rain fell, and the wind continued to howl. In the distance, they thought they could make out vague lights in the distance. Lights from what must be the small town of Schofield, blinking on the horizon.

They had traveled what they estimated to be about a third the way across the lake, when from the starboard side of the first canoe one of the boys spotted a dark shadow traveling along. The shadow dipped beneath the surface, out of sight, but reappeared moments later along the port side of the second canoe.

A large, pointed stinger emerged from the water, rippling through the waves toward them. Frightened, one of the boys struck out at the thing with his oar. The paddle bounced away, and the stinger continued on unimpeded. Without warning, an instant later a large pincher, like the claw of the crab, shot from the water and grabbed the same scout. With a shriek the boy was pulled from the canoe, disappearing beneath the surface of the water. The only evidence of his departure, the bubbles rising from the spot where he had disappeared.

Moments later the claw re-emerged near the front canoe. A second scout was grabbed.

In terror, the boys paddled faster than ever. The shadow followed. The first canoe was heaved into the air as the monster emerged beneath it. The canoe tipped, and its cargo of boys spilled into the water. One by one, the boys were plucked beneath the waves by some unseen force—their voices screaming, their arms flailing as each in turn disappeared into the icy depths. The creature emerged again beneath the second canoe. Again, the boys were tipped into the water. Again, one by one, their cries were silenced with a wattery gurgle as each was swallowed beneath the dark surface of the lake.

Finally, only one boy remained. The smallest of the group, who despite the taunting of the other boys had refused share in the grizzly feast of crawdad. In silence he waited, wondering if each breath would be his last. Knowing that at any moment he would be plucked beneath the waves. Devoured. Plucked under like fish-food in a tank.

One thing was certain, he would not go without a fight. Swimming toward one of the upturned canoes, he managed to grab hold of a wooden oar floating nearby. Using the oar to buoy himself up, he waited.

The shadow came. At first it circled him. Round and round it swam, slowly closing in. Then it emerged, crawling partway on-top of the upturned canoe. Surveying the surroundings. Surveying him. What he noticed first about the thing was its eyes. They were large, and protuberant. Something cold, unfeeling, and

When we fail to listen to the warnings our parents give us, or fail to pay attention to good advice from leaders and teachers, we are inviting trouble. These people don't offer us advice just to "be bossy," or to "tell us what to do." It is really just the opposite. Our parents love us, and want to warn us when they see danger ahead in our lives. Likewise, our leaders and teachers also care about us, and want to help us make good decisions.

Discussion:

- * ***What good advice have your leaders and teachers given to you lately?***
- * ***What warnings will you give to your children when you become a parent?***

FIVE:

STRANDED

I yo hin-le', Sasquatch kin-ne'.

—Translated from the Pa'anchi proverb to mean, walk with fear, the fiend of the forest is near!”

The single-engine aircraft was late taking off from the municipal airport at San Diego. Tom and Gretchen Porter, along with Tom's younger brother Brady, were traveling home for the Christmas holiday to visit Tom's parents in Denver, Colorado. It was storming much of the way. So to avoid some particularly bad weather looming over Southwestern Utah, Tom veered slightly to the north of his usual flight path. Although it was late, Tom was fairly certain as he glanced over the map that they would be just fine. Sure, there were a couple of peaks looming above the 10,000 foot mark—but what were the odds that he would actually hit one? He knew things would be fine, so he kept to his revised route and just flew forward through the stormy night.

Suddenly, an enormous mountain face appeared in front of the plane. Pulling back on the steering column with all his strength, Tom tried to pull the plane up, away from the mountain. But it was too late.

The impact of the crash snapped Tom's neck, killing him instantly. Gretchen's legs were both broken. Miraculously, Brady survived the wreck with only a few minor scrapes and bruises. As the two survivors waited out the cold, lonely night, it became apparent that it would be up to Brady to go for help.

At last the sky began to fill with light, and the sun rose lazily above the high, rugged Eastern slope of the mountain. Shivering, Brady stepped out in the freezing, waist-deep snow. No signs of civilization could be seen in any direction. He decided that his best bet would be to make his way to the top of the peak, to get a better look around for roads, or other signs of human life. He had to find something. His own life and Gretchen's life depended on it. So he gritted his teeth, clenched his fists, and struggled to make his way up the steep slope. The higher he climbed, the colder the wind seemed to blow, and the deeper the snow became. After he had made it several hundred yards, he chanced upon something utterly bewildering. It was a path. A well-used path. Zigging and zagging its way steadily up the mountain side. How strange it seemed, that in such a remote location, someone would be using a trail such as this. He wondered at first

whether it might be a trail used by mountain goats, or some other tenacious wintry animal. But the prints along the path erased that possibility entirely. The prints marking the path were definitely human in appearance, although they were much larger than any print he had ever seen. Strangest of all, the prints were not boot-prints—they were bare. He could easily make out heel marks, along with five clear and distinct toe marks. But necessity drove him on. Barefoot or not, whoever made these prints might be able to help him. It was his only hope. He needed help, desperately.

Brady followed the trail as it wound upward, back and forth, until at last it led to a dark, gaping cavity in the mountain side. Cautiously he approached the opening. As he drew closer, he recoiled in disgust at the smell coming from inside. It was a musty, foul smell—of refuse and rot. With a sneer of disgust, he pulled a matchbook from his pocket, then striking a single match he stepped inside.

As he walked two or three paces inside the cave, he noticed an unusual crunching underfoot. Looking down, he was shocked to see that the floor of the cavern was strewn with a tangling of animal bones. Bones of all shapes and sizes, crackling and snapping beneath his feet. A sudden jolt of pain shot through his fingers as the flame of the paper match reached his fingers. Brady reflexively dropped the match, which extinguished on the floor, leaving Brady in sudden, unexpected darkness. Fumbling through his coat pocket he again found the match book, and trembling with cold managed to light a second match. He cautiously took a few more steps deeper into the cave. But the stench and horror of the place only increased. He recoiled with shock as he noticed numerous animal skulls placed along the natural shelves of the cavern wall, as if in decoration. Here a mountain goat, there a deer, there an antelope, here a cougar, and there a bobcat. And at the far back of the cave, a human skull. And sitting next to it, a large lump of unrefined gold ore. And beside it, several glittering jewels, and a large, open bag of silver coins.

Brady stood entranced, marveling at the unexpected treasure. He stepped forward, reaching for the bag. But his fingers again suddenly jarred with pain as the fire of the second match reached them. Dropping the match to the floor, the chamber was again swallowed in darkness. He fumbled once more to find the matchbook. From behind him, he sensed something entering the cavern. He turned, but his sight was impaired by the sheer size of the shadow before him. Something huge, something massive, something hulking, and hairy, was standing there, blocking off almost all of the light from the entryway. Finally, he managed to light the match.

He was aghast at what he saw. Just a few feet from him stood the creature. It was human-like, but also inhuman. Eight feet tall at least, perhaps more. Its eyes seemed to flicker a dull reddish-orange, reflecting the light of his single match. A low, threatening growl escaped its throat, and pair of long, claw-like hands stretched out menacingly toward him—hands crusted with large brown flakes of dried blood. Its razor sharp fangs glistened in the flickering light as it moved slowly toward him.

Ouch! His fingers! Brady dropped the third and final match to the ground, where it quickly went out.

One thousand feet below, inside the frozen cockpit of the wrecked single-engine airplane, Gretchen could not hear the screams of agony echoing from the mountainside high above her.

It wasn't until several days latter that the lost airplane was at last discovered. As the men of the search and rescue party came upon the scene of the crash landing, they discovered two frozen bodies inside the cockpit of the plane. They failed to notice a single trail of frozen boot-prints wandering away from the crash, and up the side of the mountain. Nor did they observe a larger set of tracks coming down the mountain, circling the plane at a cautious distance, and returning again to the cloud-swept heights above. But all of them could sense a pair of eyes watching them from some hidden place above. Orange-red eyes, flickering with an intense and seething rage.

I yo hin-le', Sasquatch kin-ne'.

—“Walk with fear, the fiend of the forest is near!”

Councilor's Comments / Scoutmaster's Minute:

The Scout Motto teaches a boy to "be prepared." Proper planning ahead of time can prevent needless last-minute emergencies. Taking the time to clearly think things through before you begin can prevent long-term inconvenience, and even heart-ache.

Discussion:

- * How did the pilot's lack of planning in this story contribute to the disaster that followed?***
- * Can you think of a time in your life when good preparation might have made a difference in the outcome of something important?***

Six:

THE SPRING HOUSE

The year was 1884. James Walker and his family of four wives and twenty-seven children had just taken over the management of the old Baggs ranch on Antelope Island—located ten miles off the Eastern shore of the Great Salt Lake. John Baggs, overseeing the workings of the Perpetual Immigration Company, had been the first to inhabit the island in 1848, just one year after the Mormon settlers arrived in the Salt Lake Valley. With the help of other members of the Company, Baggs had built a small farmhouse and outbuildings along the Southern shore, and grazed livestock for the Church on the island for several years until management finally shifted to Harold Johnson, who in turn handed it over to Walker and his clan.

The oldest of the Walker children was a fine, strong-armed young man named Richard. He loved his Pa very much, and wanted to all he could with the Company. He didn't mind the solitude of the island, and he wasn't one to complain about a hard-day's work. Yet there was something about the place that didn't sit right with him. Perhaps it was the pungent stench that permeated the air—the smell of rot and decay. It was a sickly-sweet odor that lingered incessantly, and infiltrated every nook and cranny of the island—only lifting when the wind picked-up enough to carry the smell away across the lake.

Richard also disliked the old spring-house, nestled snugly in the hillside beneath the ranch house—half buried in the ground to keep an even temperature year round. He couldn't quite pinpoint the source of his disquiet, except that there just seemed to be something eerie about the old building. It was nestled atop a spring that oozed from the ground like a slowly bleeding cut. Once it escaped the murky pool of the spring-house cistern, the dark water trickled down the hillside until it was swallowed by the lake along its lapping shore—in a pathetic effort to quench the insatiable thirst of the great, salty inland sea.

He was also troubled by the way that shadows seemed to move inside the building when the moon emerged from hiding behind a passing evening cloud. And the way voices seemed to whisper from the building, as the wind blew through the gaps in its craggy rock walls, or pushed the creaking wooden door back and forth on its rusted hinges. "Whooooose Next?" It seemed to whisper. "Whooooooooooooooooose Next?"

Richard was also made uneasy by the stench that came from inside the

building—a charred smell that reminded him of the odor burnt flesh, like cattle at branding time. Except that at the spring house the smell was sweeter, more sickly and pungent than the odor of burnt cattle.

Growing about the spring house was a grove of poplar trees, planted by the earlier settlers to the island—most likely Briggs and his bunch. The trees were pleasant enough during the spring and summer months, giving welcome shade to the blazing summer sun. Yet in the winter the trees became stark and bare. And the grove was transformed into a dismal place where large flocks of crows landed, squawking harshly in the twisted branches, looking down in greedy anticipation at the human inhabitants. As if remembering some grim feast from the past—cawing anxiously for more.

His feeling of unease was not helped by the story that old man Johnson had told Richard's Pa when he first bought the land—that many years ago, a dead body really had been found just below the spring house, where the water trickles out from under the stone wall. The old timer had said that the man's blood—which had been spilt by his own hand—had flown into the stream. The folks that found him did their best to clean up the place, but the dark brown stains would simply not wash away. And from the spring house, the stream still flowed with a slight reddish tint.

Richard had asked his Pa about what Johnson had said, but his Pa said it was all hog-wash. There was nothing to any of what the old man had said. If there was a slight red coloration to the spring water, it was from the tint the water obtained from the red volcanic rock of the island—and not from some dead body. The howling inside the house, was just the wind whistling through the gaps in the windowsill, and beneath the door. The flickers from inside were just his eyes playing tricks on him. There was no need to be superstitious. Richard would soon be a man, and should know better than to hold to such nonsense. Still, an aching, nagging feeling lurked in the pit of Richard's stomach every time he drew near the spring house.

It was late one night. The day before the Sabbath. It was the coldest part of winter, and Richard had been sent by his Ma down to the spring house to fetch a bag of potatoes that had been stored there since the fall. As Richard approached the door, he was startled. From inside he could make out the hushed sound of whispering voices. Glancing through the window, he could make out the dark silhouettes of shadows moving within.

"Its just superstition. Its just superstition." He chanted quietly to himself, as if mere words could break the spell of fear that gripped his mind and heart. He

struck a match, lit the lantern, then pushing open the old wooden door, he burst into the building, and found . . . nothing. Only darkness and silence awaiting him. He quickly made his way to the back of the spring house. He nervously hefted up a bag of potatoes with one hand, and holding the other shuffled eagerly back toward the door. In his haste, he stumbled over a rock jutting out from the base of the basin. Wincing in pain, he stumbled and landed on the ground. Luckily, he was able to keep the lantern from falling shattering on the floor. He had no such luck with the bag, however, and potatoes tumbled from its open mouth. Setting the lantern down next to him, Richard carefully began gathering up the potatoes. As he felt the floor he noticed that one of the rocks was loose—perhaps the very rock he had tripped over. Angrily, he wiggled the stone loose, and with a grunt of satisfaction heaved it aside. To his astonishment, there in the hollow left by the stone he immediately noticed something. An old leather pouch. He unstrung it and opened it. Inside was a book. No. Not a book, but an old diary of some sort, written in thin, scrawling handwriting. Gathering up the rest of the potatoes, he returned the diary to the pouch, packed it inside the potato bag, then returned to the house.

Once inside, he delivered the potatoes to the larder. He warmed himself by the fire for a few moments, then opened the pouch and began to slowly and carefully thumb through the diary. The beginning pages were dated from the fall of 1856. Anxiously, Richard began to read.

October 15. Brigham Young ordered the Saints to gather in Utah Valley. They say an army is on its way to wipe out every last Mormon. All of our supplies and rations have been sent to Provo to feed the hungry. The women and children have been ordered to leave. A few of us have agreed to stay here to watch a small herd of cattle, just in case things go bad in Utah Valley. Everybody is gone, except four of us. All the gunpowder and ammunition sent away on to protect the saints in Provo. We only have enough to kill a few wild antelope. One thing's for sure. It will be a long, lonely time.

November 20. Ammunition falling low. Food and rations also falling low. Antelope scattered & distant. Difficult to shoot. Winter harsh and cold. Firewood scarce. Hunkered down in the spring house to stay warm.

December 5. Disaster struck. Ammunition all gone. Tried to get to shore

for more supplies, found boat gone. Not tied down well, wind blew away. Food almost gon. No gun powder. Don't know what to do.

December 29. Tried to cross ice at South end of Island to get to shore. Zach fell through. Pulled him out and brought him back home. Tried to thaw him out. No use. He had fever and chills.

January 2. Zach is dead. Food all gone. We been arguing over what to do with Zach's dead body. Can't bury him, ground's too cold. We're starving. Hungry. The crows are circling. Look's like we're all gonna die too.

January 3. Cast lots last night. Lot fell on me. So I cut up Zach's body. Stripped the meat from the bones. Cooked it on the fire. Had to shoo off the crows.

January 15. We know it ain't right, eatin' another man. Taste never leaves your mouth. Grease never leaves your fingers. Tempers are all short.

January 29. Zach all used up. Hungry again. Jake & Caleb plottin' to kill me next, & eat me. Heard 'em last night when they thought I was sleepin'. But they can't kill me if I kill them first!

February 2. I done it. While they slept. Only the moon saw. Should have enough meat to make it 'til spring now.

February 15. Crows keep coming back. Peckin' at the bodies, & eatin' what's mine. Won't get 'em though. Moved the fellers to a safer place.

February 20. Been thinkin'. Some folks might not understand why I done it. May not understand what it means to be hungry. May not believe they were gonna kill me first. Don't know what'll happen to me when they find me.

March 4. An' I been hearin' ghosts whispering outside. Zach & the boys are comin' back to get me. Won't be happy 'til I'm dead too. This place is

cursed. The moon keeps spyin' on me.

March 15. The fellers 've been telling me what I have to do. I don't wanna do it, but they say I have to pay a *blood atonement* to make things right again. Besides, the crows are gonna get me anyway, or the others, when they find out what I done. No choice. I'll do it tonight.

The journal ended there. Richard immediately showed it to his Pa, and the next day they went down to the spring house, pulled up the rocks lining the floor, and began to dig. And there, in a shallow grave, they found the charred bones of three men. The flesh was gnawed away, with the scrapings of teeth marks still engraving the bones.

With the help of the Bishop and the Elders, the bones were taken from the island and given a proper Christian burial in Salt Lake City. Many a prayer was uttered, in hopes that the curse might somehow be lifted from the island.

A rotten stench still permeates the shore. The water from the lower stream still runs a light red. And on some nights, when the mood comes out from its hiding place behind the clouds, flickering shadows can be seen inside the windows of the spring house. And a voice still whisper from inside.

“Wwhhhoooooooooooooooo'ssss neexxt?”

Councilor's Comments / Scoutmaster's Minute:

Victor Frankle, a survivor of the Holocaust, taught that "everything can be taken from a man but one thing, the last of the human freedoms: to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way." Despair is a deadly vice. Those who abandon hope amid trying circumstances are less likely to survive the tragedy. We can find meaning and purpose for our lives, even in the most trying of circumstances, if we choose to maintain hope. "He that knows the why for his existence will be able to bear almost any how."

Discussion:

- * **What are some of the things God expects us to do in this life?**
- * **What can we do each day to help remember that God has a plan for each of us?**

SEVEN:

THE HUNTER

It was for murder that Brandon Lamareau was sentenced to receive the death penalty—and became housed on death row at the Utah State Prison. He was convicted of six separate counts of First Degree Murder—for the merciless slaughter of six different men.

The slayings occurred during the fall of 1984. The deer hunting season was underway, and Scott Roundabout, a State Division of Wildlife Resources officer, was patrolling beneath the Pine Valley Mountains, near Baker Dam Reservoir, when he came upon the campsite. As he stepped out of his truck to check, he could immediately tell that something was wrong. It was too quiet. Although it was mid-morning, the camp vehicles were still parked nearby, and nobody was in sight.

The smoldering coals left from the previous night's campfire were sending a thin, ghost-like wisp of smoke skyward. Scott followed the sound of buzzing flies around a large juniper tree, to where the hunters had left their prey to hang and cure—he wanted to check for tags on all the animals. Hopefully he would find no evidence of poaching among this group. So far it had been a good season.

At first he thought that the skinned and gutted animals hanging from the trees were the remains of the deer shot by the hunting party. But the smell of the animals was different, and the anatomy was all wrong. As he drew nearer he turned pale. Wide-eyed, gaping with horror, he realized the carcasses were not deer. They were men. Six men, hanging upside down from the tree—skinned and gutted, and carefully peppered for curing.

When he finally regained control of himself, Scott quickly made his way back to his truck. As he was opening the car door, and stepping inside, a flash of color to one side caught his attention. Nearby was a man, dressed in bright hunter's orange. The man was sitting alone in his tent, passing a hunting knife back and forth—from one red, blood-stained hand to another.

"Drop your knife, or I'll shoot!" Scott exclaimed, drawing his gun.

The man looked slowly up, and smiled. It was a wide smile, showing a row of rotten, jagged teeth. Slowly, the man pushed back the tent flap, stood, and began walking toward the officer. Closer. Closer. Fingering his knife and smiling.

"Stop, or I'll shoot!" Scott repeated, his gun trembling.

Closer the man came.

Soon, only a matter of feet separated the two men.

“BANG!” Scott fired his first shot.

The man fell to the ground, unmoving. Carefully, Scott checked the man’s pulse and breathing. He was still alive, but wouldn’t be for much longer unless he received medical attention. Sighing in exasperation, Scott radioed for help. An ambulance was dispatched, and within an hour the hunter was on his way to Dixie Regional Medical Center.

The doctors were able to save the hunter—a loner and recluse later identified as Brandon Lamareau. When his health was sufficiently restored, charges were brought, a trial conducted, and the man was found guilty. His sentence of death was declared, and he was transported to the State Prison to await his execution.

But execution did not come immediately. Lamareau’s attorney’s made use of every available appeal, every petition for post-conviction relief, every loophole available to postpone and procrastinate his death. Years went by. And then a full decade, with no execution date in sight.

Then something unexpected happened. The State Prison decided that based on Lamareau’s model behavior in prison, it would permit him to be housed at the Washington County Jail, or “Purgatory,” as it was commonly called, located on the outskirts of Hurricane City. He was to be transported there by way of a secured, prison van.

Nobody knows for certain what caused the prison van to skid off the road and crash through the guard rails, and land upside down in the chill waters of the Virgin River. But one thing was clear. The single passenger of the van, death row inmate Brandon Lamareau, had escaped.

The response was immediate, and overwhelming. Help was called in from all across the state. Dogs, helicopters, officers, every available officer—to help track down the dangerous fugitive who had murdered so brutally just ten years before.

The search proved fruitless. Nobody could find the man. The only clue came a week after the escape, when a woman living in nearby Coral Canyon claimed that she had awakened to a shadowy figure standing just inside the entry way to her bedroom. Standing, staring at a knife. She screamed and the figure vanished like a phantom.

A week later another sighting occurred, this time near the small town of Santa Clara. After that the signs disappeared. Nothing. Days passed. Weeks passed. And then years passed, with nothing more. Well, almost nothing more. From time to time, some hiker or hunter who ventures into the remotest regions of the Pine Valley Mountains will return from their excursion claiming to have come

across the remnants of some creature hanging from a tree—skinned, gutted, peppered, curing in the dry desert air. Yet Brandon Lamareau couldn't possibly have lived alone out there in the wilderness all these years. Could he?

Still others say that one day he will appear again and repeat his crime at some other place—in some other campground.

Perhaps this campground.

Perhaps tonight.

Councilor's Comments / Scoutmaster's Minute:

To be “treacherous” means that you take advantage of someone who trusts you in order to hurt them, or take something from them. In this story, the deer hunter turned against his fellow hunting buddies, who trusted him to help them hunt deer—not hunt them! One of the twelve points of the Boy Scout Law is trustworthiness. Trustworthiness is the opposite of treachery. It means that you can be counted on to do what you say you will do. To be a trustworthy is one of the most important things a person can learn.

Discussion:

- * What have your parents done to teach you to be trustworthy?*
- * What will you when you are a parent to teach your children to be trustworthy?*